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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

NEA FOR FO; NEA/SA/EX FOR AUSTIN-FERGUSON; DEPT FOR
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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PTER](#) [PBTS](#) [PHUM](#) [KWBG](#) [KPAL](#) [IS](#) [ASEC](#)

SUBJECT: WB/G SITREP: JULY 21, 2005 (1400 HOURS LOCAL) --
IDF ENTER BETHLEHEM TO ARREST SUSPECTED AL-AQSA MILITANT;
MORTAR FIRE INJURES IDF SOLDIER IN GAZA

This is a joint ConGen Jerusalem/Embassy Tel Aviv cable.

1. (SBU) Summary: In Gaza, one IDF soldier was lightly wounded by a mortar shell fired at an IDF outpost near Neve Dekalim settlement. Israeli media reported that Israeli police arrested about 250 disengagement opponents who tried to enter Gaza, some of whom reportedly tried to cut through the fence surrounding Gaza. In the West Bank, 29 al-Aqsa gunmen took over the PA Ministry of Interior building in Hebron July 20, demanding that they be enlisted into the PA security services and put on the payroll. The IDF entered Bethlehem and arrested Sami al-Azza of the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades on July 20. The PLC passed the first reading of amendments to the Basic Law relating to expanding the PLC and allowing for 50 percent proportional representation by party lists in PLC elections. End summary.

Gaza

2. (SBU) ATTACKS:

-- Deaths: Nil.

-- Injuries/Mortars: One IDF soldier was lightly wounded by a mortar shell fired at an IDF outpost near Neve Dekalim settlement at 0035 on July 21.

-- Mortars/Rockets: The IDF reported four incidents (six shells) of mortar fire against IDF soldiers during the 24-hour period ending at 0600 on July 21. (See "Injuries/Mortars" for only injury reported.)

-- Shootings: The IDF reported three incidents of Palestinian gunfire directed at IDF troops or settlers in Gaza during the 24-hour period ending at 0600 on July 21. No injuries were reported.

-- Explosives: The IDF reported that PA police found and dismantled two explosive devices near Dugit settlement at 0050 on July 21. Another explosive device was found near Dugit at 1215 on July 20. Israeli media reported that the IDF destroyed the device in a controlled explosion.

3. (SBU) ARRESTS: Nil.

4. (SBU) INCURSIONS/DEMOLITIONS: Nil.

5. (SBU) BORDER CROSSINGS:

-- Route Four (Salahadeen Road), the main north-south traffic artery, was open/closed

-- Erez Crossing was closed to Palestinians except those holding Jerusalem IDs. It was open for international travelers.

-- The Erez Industrial Zone was closed.

-- Sufa Crossing was closed for Palestinian laborers, but open for the import of aggregates used in construction.

-- Karni Terminal was partially open.

-- Rafah Terminal was open in both directions except for Palestinian males between the ages of 16 and 35, who are barred from traveling from Gaza to Egypt through the terminal.

-- Toufah checkpoint was open in both directions for all Palestinians except males aged 16 to 30 .

6. (SBU) POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS: Israeli media reported that Israeli police arrested about 250 disengagement opponents who tried to enter Gaza. Some reportedly tried to cut through the fence surrounding Gaza. Israeli media also reported that the standoff between disengagement opponents

and the police and IDF at Kfar Maimon in the Negev ended during the night of July 20-21 when most of the protesters departed peacefully.

West Bank

[17.](#) (SBU) ATTACKS:

-- Deaths: Nil

-- Injuries: Nil

-- Shootings: Palestinian shepherds near Tulkarm told Palestinian media and international NGOs that settlers in neighboring settlements fired rifles at them on July 20, but there were no injuries.

-- Armed Strikes: 29 al-Aqsa gunmen took over the PA Ministry of Interior building in Hebron July 20, demanding that they be enlisted into the PA security services and put on the payroll. After occupying the building for two hours amidst negotiations with local security officials, the gunmen departed.

[18.](#) (SBU) ARRESTS:

-- The IDF entered Bethlehem and arrested Sami al-Azza of the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades on July 20, according to PA security sources.

-- Seven Palestinian and international protesters against the separation barrier were arrested in Bili, in village by the IDF and border police on July 20, according to Palestinian newspapers.

[19.](#) (SBU) POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS:

-- The PLC passed the first reading of amendments to the Basic Law relating to expanding the PLC and allowing for 50 percent proportional representation by party lists in PLC elections.

WALLES